TOPOGRAPHICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN SUBURBS OF KILKENNY.

BY MR. JOHN HOGAN.

THE western side of the city of Kilkenny is situated along the eastern slope of a ridge which projects from the south, and, as shown on the accompanying sketch of the district, is bounded on the west and north by the stream of the Bregach, and on the east by the River Nore.[1]   This district, denuded of its thoroughfares and its domiciles, of its piles of masonry, its mansions and its court-yards, would present to an observer on the opposite bank of the river the aspect of an elevated promontory sloping towards the north, and from unequal altitudes, declining to the banks of the streams which wash the irregular curves of its base.   At its western extremity, this ridge attains its greatest elevation, and, under the name of "Robert's Hill," abruptly descends to the bank of the Bregach.   Following hence the course of the current, we enter the grounds of Kilcreen, where the northern slope of this suburban tract assumes a less precipitous appearance ; and here, known as "Croker's Hill," graduates to the margin of the stream.   Curving towards the east with the sweep of the rivulet, we pass through the lower valley of the Bregach, and hence the natural peculiarities of this district are less apparent, in consequence of the streets and lanes which cover it. Here the Nore once swept majestically through scenes of sylvan shade and pastoral beauty, ere the stern arms of war were carried into the ancient "*preserves*" of nature.   On the slope of this ridge, as it descends to the Nore, did the colonists construct one of their earliest settlements ; and nearly parallel with the banks of the river they founded the "High-street," the nucleus of the future city ; and higher up they subsequently erected the town wall, the district outside of which towards the west, and extending to the limits we are now about to traverse, constitutes the western suburbs of our modern city.   The environs of the ancient parish church of St. Patrick (including the entire district outside the south wall of the town) and the locality known by the *soubriquet* of "Shradh na buddagh," form the southern suburbs of Kilkenny.   These localities preserve to our own times many of their original peculiarities. Their traditional lore and primitive observances shed around them a degree of romantic interest which the stern utilitarianism of modern times would despise or ignore.   Social changes, resulting from various causes, have all but obliterated the primeval features worn

[1] The plan of the city intended to illustrate this and future papers on the same subject is unavoidably held over till the next section of these observations.

by those quaint neighbourhoods. Each locality is rapidly changing its character; every year tends to efface some one of its surviving vestiges. To gather up a few of the time-honoured traditions, and to preserve from total oblivion the still recoverable traces of the early topography of Kilkenny, are the end and aim of this humble essay.

The town walls were erected by Robert Talbot, "a worthie gentleman," about the year 1400,[1] portions of them are still standing, and the entire were nearly perfect a hundred years ago, at the period of Rocque's survey.[2] This fortification consisted of three faces, which formed the northern, southern, and western boundaries of the "Hightown," and, with the river as eastern line, enclosed an oblong area, about 2600 feet from north to south, by 1000 from east to west. The south wall extended from near the south tower of the Castle to the tower still standing in the National Model School grounds.[3] The west wall formed nearly a right angle with the former, and ran in a northern line from this tower to near the bank of the Bregach River, where it turned to the east, formed a re-entrant angle, and, having reached the Bregach, thence followed the course of the stream till it terminated in "Evans' Turret," at the junction of the Bregach with the Nore. The north wall was furnished with two gates, viz., the "Gray Frerren Gate,"[4] and the "Hightown Gate." The south wall had two gates, "Castle Gate," and "St. Patrick's Gate," and the western wall was provided with three gates, namely, "Walkin's Gate," "St. James's Gate," and the "Black Frerren Gate." We will now ramble along the site of this old rampart: we shall stop at each of the principal parts, and inquire whence led the ancient road which must have existed at the time of the erection of the gate; and as one of the most interesting localities in the suburbs, "Walkin's Gate," is now being denuded of the last traces of its primeval simplicity, so that probably in a very few years the name of even the locality will be erased from our suburban geography, and superseded by a more modern title, namely, "The Fair Green,"—we will, in consequence, commence our inquiry with—

[1] See Ledwich's "History and Antiquities of Irishtown and Kilkenny," p. 448; also an interesting paper on this subject by Mr. J. G. A. Prim. "Transactions," vol. i. p. 37.

[2] "Plan de la Ville de Kilkenny, par Jean Rocque, Chronographie du Roi." The copy of this Survey that I have seen, and which is in the possession of the proprietor of the "Kilkenny Journal," bears the date "1757." On closer examination, this part of the inscription appears like a manuscript production, though very skilfully performed. However, the actual era of the Survey cannot be much aside of the assigned date, as it was executed subsequent to the construction of the

new canal, which was commenced in 1755 (Tighe's "Survey," page 134), and previous to the destruction of the old bridges, which were carried away by a flood in 1763. (Id., p. 131).

[3] In Rocque's map the wall does not cross the head of the "Parade," nor join the south tower of the Castle, the cause of which we shall discuss lower down.

[4] "Gray Freren," or Gray Friars. The orthography used in the text is that found in one of the Laffan papers, published by Ledwich, entitled "The Rent-charge of the ancient Common Revenue of the City of Kilkenny, by the year 1628."

WALKIN'S GATE.—This gate stood over the street of the same name, about the site of the present Poor Relief Office. Part of the foundation may still be seen at the opposite side of the street, at the entrance to a starch-yard. In 1628, David Rothe occupied the rooms over this gate, for which he paid the Corporation the annual rent of 8d.[1] The gate was still standing in 1757,[2] and was probably taken down to afford a more commodious approach of the Cork road into the city, about the year 1788, as the lease of the houses built on its south side, and running thence into the Sconce,[3] bears this date, and is signed " William Davis, of Kilkenny, Gentleman."

Sixty years ago, the site of the gate at the south side was occupied by a small cottage, in which John Ayres, one of the old Protestant *Freemen* of the town, resided. This house was subsequently taken down by the late Sir John Blunden, Bart., and the large dwelling erected now used as the Relief Office. Down to the year 1757 no house had been built on the north side of the street, from this gate to the corner of Flood-street.[4] A dead wall separated the road or street from the Nursery Garden, the principal entrance into which was then close by Walkin's Gate opposite the Poor Relief Office. The open space further west, since known as " Walkin's Lough," was then called " Walkin's Green." The range of cabins now partially concealed behind the grave-yard was then recognised as the " Closh," and here terminated our western suburbs one hundred years ago.

Walkin's Green appears to have originally extended over the

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[1] " The Rent-charge of the ancient Common Revenue of the City of Kilkenny, by the year 1628."

[2] Rocque's " Plan de la Ville."

[3] At the period of the erection of the walls, the town does not appear to have extended up the side of the hill as far as the site of the rampart. The unoccupied open space between the " High-street" and the town wall was gradually enclosed, until a narrow passage only remained under the wall. This passage or lane was called the " *Sconce*," derived, no doubt, from its proximity to the bastions and outworks of the fortification; and thus we have " Walkin's Sconce," and " James's Sconce." These terms are now being gradually disused, as the walls have been removed and forgotten. The tower or bastion that stood at the head of Collier's-lane, and the wall connecting this tower with the Castle over Walkin's Gate, were taken down by the late Mr. John Robertson, about the year 1809, and the present range of houses built on its site, and since then, this part of the Sconce is known as " Garden-row."

[4] Flood-street derives its name from the proprietor of the property through which it was opened, and in consequence it cannot be more than 150 years in existence. Before its construction the Nursery Gardens were united with the orchards west of the street, the entrance into which was through the small passage or lane still open opposite New-street. The house between this passage and the west corner of Flood-street is said by the old inhabitants of the neighbourhood to be the oldest house in Kilkenny; it is shown on Rocque's Map, and was certainly standing before Flood-street was opened. From the projection of the chimneys through the gable walls, as well as from the general style of the masonry, the house would appear older than those of the Elizabethan period; and from the depth of the floor under the present level of the street, it must have been built in part of the valley which formed the basin of the lough, and at a time when the bed of this basin was much lower than it was when the waters were carried off, by means of a sewer, to the river.

whole space included between the three old roads and the town wall. It must, however, have been early encroached on and reclaimed, as the suburbs were extended. The centre of the Green being lower than the surrounding grounds, and the outlet by which the water originally escaped being cut off by the buildings erected on the north-east, the Green subsequently became a basin or reservoir to drain the surrounding elevation. At the period of Rocque's Survey, the space covered by the water measured, at its extremes, 500 by 250 feet;[1] this was probably in the summer season, when the water had been evaporated, for within my own memory the entire area of the Green (nearly 600 by 400 feet), except the road, was covered by one great sheet of water, which, when agitated by the winds after heavy rains, rolled in volumes of foam from the banks of the orchards out to the centre of the street. The soil carried down with the streams from the surrounding high grounds, and deposited in the bed of the lough, was every year lifting it toward the level of the road, and thus spreading the water over a greater surface, curiously illustrating the old proverb current amongst the townsfolk, that Walkin's Lough was to drown Kilkenny: so that the drainage of the whole Green became a matter of absolute necessity. About the year 1828 the new road to the county gaol was commenced through the centre of the lough, and about the same period, a circular or double-arched sewer was constructed through Walkin-street to the main sewer in High-street, for the purpose of carrying off the water. Much interest had been evinced by the inhabitants of the town to witness the drainage; and after the completion of the sewer, a special day and hour were appointed for the purpose, when a great concourse of all classes assembled to behold the phenomenon. It was on this occasion that a notorious character, one Sheeney,[2] performed the singular feat of traversing "on all fours" the whole length of the conduit from the lough to the Nore. After his appearance from this subterranean excursion, the dam was removed, and the pent-up waters gushed forth with great velocity amidst the cheers of the crowd and the capers of innumerable urchins, and thus Walkin's Lough disappeared for ever. Some further observations on this locality fall within the more interesting inquiry respecting the history of—

ST. RIOCH'S CHURCHYARD.—St. Rioch's, or, as it is vulgarly

[1] " Plan de la Ville."

[2] James Sheeney, a denizen of this locality, was the greatest "rowdy boy" of his day. He was the leader in every escapade, so that custom and notoriety associated his name with every nocturnal disturbance. From all that I can gather respecting him, he appears to have been rather the slave of uncontrolled animal instincts than a designing knave. After his adventure, alluded to above, he sailed down the Nore in an open delf creel, exclaiming to his astonished spectators:— " He that is born to be hanged will never be drowned." In his case the adage was verified. Shortly after, he was convicted of the then capital crime of rape, and was the last person executed at " Gallows Green," now known as " John's Green."

called, St. Rock's Churchyard, is situated at the southmost angle of Walkin's Green. A range of cabins formerly separated it from the road, and were only removed within the last forty years. In front of each of these houses a cesspool was sunk for the manufacture of manure, and I have been informed by those who saw them, that from the ends and sides of these pools, human skeletons projected out, proving that at one period the churchyard extended under the line of the present road, and, as we shall now see, it also extended down under the lough towards the centre of the Green. The tradition respecting the origin of St. Rioch's, preserved in the folk-lore of the last generation in this neighbourhood, is not without interest in our present inquiry. According to it, the bed of the lough was originally an isolated valley surrounded by woods ; a spring well rippled from one of its slopes, and meandered as a rivulet at its bottom. Within the shelter of this secluded vale, St. Rioch built his cell, wherein he lived for a time in solitude and prayer; he was subsequently joined by a numerous body of disciples whom the fame of his sanctity attracted to his retirement ; here he died and was buried, and over his grave his followers erected a church, and dedicated it to his memory. Subsequent events converted the locality into a ruin ; the channel through which the water escaped became choked up, and henceforth the beautiful valley of St. Rioch served only as a basin or pond to contain the waters from the surrounding elevations.[1]

Whatever importance or value may be attached to this tale, it is quite certain that a "holy well" formerly existed here, and it was so generally believed by the old inhabitants sixty years ago. In the summer season, when the waters had evaporated, the custom had long prevailed amongst the people of the locality to excavate the deposits of the lough, and remove them for manure. About the year 1812, one Timothy Kelly, by trade a breeches-maker, but at the time of this narrative a retailer of punch and porter in the house in High-street lately taken down to erect the new grocery establishment of Mr. John Coyne, determined to carry on this operation on a monster scale. On a July morning he employed forty labourers to extract the mud from the bed of the basin ; they ranged themselves in a line north from the grave-yard, and speedily opened a ravine in the accumulated *debris* carried down by the streams for probably some hundreds of years. In the course of this operation, a man named Michael Murphy, a native of this district, came on a range of stones

[1] With the above tradition I am familiar from my childhood, and the direct medium through which it reached me was a very old and much esteemed, though humble inhabitant of this part of the town, who died in St. Canice's parish about ten years since, Mr. James Dowling. He lived to the age of 105 years ; he was a great adept in antiquarian lore, and fully conversant with the local traditions of the past generation. He remembered St. Nicholas's Churchyard to have been used as a burial ground ; also the execution of the " Whiteboys" on James's Green, to both of which subjects we shall have to refer hereafter. The usual place of execution for criminals in the city was John's Green.

rudely placed so as to form so many steps, about midway between the grave-yard and the centre of the green, or somewhere very close to the present Gaol-road, when he exclaimed in a tone of triumph— "*I have the well.*" He continued to remove the slimy material, and found the stones to lead to an enclosure of irregularly shaped stones, apparently placed by design; further investigations were here intercepted by the lord of the soil, Mr. Mulhallen (father of Edward Mulhallen, Esq., of Seville Lodge), who prohibited the removal of the manure by Kelly, but permitted the excavators to carry it off for their own use. I have this narrative from an eye-witness who is still living, and was standing in the grave-yard as a spectator; he heard Murphy cry out he had found the well, and he was able to recognise the stone steps at the bottom of the pit; they were not so deep as the height of a man under the level of the road. Much interest, but no surprise, was evinced on the occasion, as then and previously no doubt was entertained that "St. Rock's Well" was covered over by the waters of the lough. The next fall of rain restored the place to its usual appearance, and the whole transaction was soon out of mind. At that period the grave-yard was not en-closed by walls; it was inundated by water in the winter, and a de-secrated common in the summer; it was, nevertheless, a place of annual pilgrimage, which continued down to our own times.

Respecting St. Rioch, little can be gleaned to associate him with this obscure locality. In the "Litany of Aengus," published by Dr. Petrie, he is thus invoked:—"SS. duodecim socios S. Riochi transmarinos inuoco in auxilium meum per Iesum Christum."[1] " I invoke the twelve foreigners, companions of St. Rioch, to help me," &c., &c. We have no information respecting the twelve pilgrims, nor the country whence they emigrated; but if it be true, as stated lower down, that Rioch was brother to Mel, and both were nephews of St. Patrick, we may safely recognise the native land of the latter as that from whence our patron and his twelve disciples sailed for Ireland. St. Rioch is specially venerated as the patron and founder of the Abbey of Inis-bo-finde in Lough-ree;[2] and it is also recorded that he was one of the most eminent founders of abbeys and monas-tic establishments in various parts of Ireland in the fifth century.[3] Whence we may fairly infer, that for each of his early companions he provided some such institute; and it will scarcely be deemed too great an intrusion on the province of conjecture to assume that the spot which has been regarded as "holy ground" in our suburbs, and which has perpetuated his name through the various vicissitudes of many generations, was one of some such institutes over which he

[1] " Inquiry into the Origin, &c., of the Round Towers of Ireland," p. 135.
[2] " Inisbofinde," or " *The Island of the* *White Cow.*"—Lanigan. vol. i., p. 421.
[3] Macgeoghegan, Dublin ed., 1844, page 154.

placed one of his pilgrim companions, who, out of veneration for his master, dedicated the locality to his memory.[1]

Archdall tells us that St. Rioch was brother to St. Mel, both of whom were sons of Darerca, the sister of St. Patrick—that he was from Britain, and was still living about the year 530.[2] Lanigan, however, argues " that so far from being brother to St. Mel, son of Darerca, or a Briton, that in the ' Acts of Rioch' he finds him called ' Mac-Hualaing,' son of Hualaing, or of the family of Laing; that he was both abbot and bishop, and was still living about the year 540. The year of his death is not recorded, but the day was on the 1st of August, on which his festival stands in the Irish Calendars,[3] and on which his " patron" was observed at the site of his old church in Walkin's-green. Whatever can be advanced on either side, the great number of those who have investigated the subject support the relationship between SS. Patrick, Rioch, and Mel. The Litany of Aengus invokes Rioch as one of the foreign saints buried in Ireland. The " Martyrology of Tallaght," published by the late Rev. M. Kelly, of Maynooth, excludes both Rioch and Mel, as it commemorates none but native saints; and the " Martyrology of Salisbury," as Lanigan himself observes, has the feast of St. Rioch and St. Mel on the 6th of February, on the ground that both were brothers.[4] Ussher sustains the same connexion, and Colgan tells us that Rioch was nephew and librarian to St. Patrick, by whom he was raised to the episcopacy.[5] And lastly the ancient ecclesiastical topography of our suburbs is singularly favourable to the relationship between the three saints, for here we have on three eminences, overhanging the historic valley of the Nore, the sites of three primitive churches, claiming respectively SS. Patrick, Mel,[6] and Rioch as founders and patrons.

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[1] We have an illustration of what is here advanced, in the name of an ancient parish in the south of this county. We are told that fifty Roman pilgrims arrived in Ireland in quest of retirement and study, and that they were divided into five equal parties, ten each to SS. Finbar, Kiaran, Finnian, Sennan, and Brendan, and from the subsequent mission of some one or more of these pilgrims, the parish of Aughaviller apparently derives its name. Here is a Round Tower, and a holy well, which both mark the spot as one of the first Christian localities, and also preserve the name and memory of St. Brendan. Aughaviller, the true orthography of which, according to Tighe, is " Agha-oiller," i. e., the " *Field of the Pilgrim*" (" Survey of Kilkenny," p. 632), connects the district with one of Brendan's ten disciples. His feast was observed at the holy well in the form of a " patron," on the 16th of May, down to a very recent period, though he is specially

honoured as patron of the diocese of Kerry and Clonfert ; and it appears highly probable that his connexion with this ancient locality was akin to that of Rioch with Kilkenny, namely, he opened here an ecclesiastical mission, placed it under the guidance of one or more of his ten pilgrims, and thus the place was called " *Aughaviller*," or the " Field of the Pilgrim." For an account of the fifty Roman pilgrims, see " Round Towers," p. 134.

[2] " Monasticon," p. 490.

[3] Vol. ii., p. 11, 12.

[4] See Lanigan's observations, and also those of the Rev. Mr. Kelly, " Martyrology," pages 68 and 69.

[5] Those who have the opportunity of consulting Colgan's " Acta SS.," will find the " Acts of Rioch" at the 6th of February.

[6] The site of St. Mel's Church, on the east bank of the Nore, is called " Tempol-a-Maula." Hanmer says that this church was

Dr. Petrie assures us that the primitive ecclesiastical establishments in Ireland were founded by the saints whose names they still respectively retain. Hence the relationship claimed for Rioch with Patrick and Mel, taken in connexion with the interesting topographical coincidence just noticed, reflects a new ray of light on our primitive ecclesiology, and exhibits the National Apostle and his two nephews founding here three missionary stations, which with a fourth subsequently opened by St. Kenny, ultimately grew up into so many parochial establishments, modified in name and locality to suit the altered circumstances of the times, but still retaining in the sites of the primitive churches the names of the respective founders, and the evidence that from the beginning the ecclesiastical districts or parishes of what we now call Kilkenny were numerically the same as at the present day.

Diocesan and parochial boundaries were regulated at the Council of Rathbreasail in 1115,[1] and at that of Kells in 1157,[2] when the revenue and taxation of the clergy were permanently established; and in 1220 the Earl Marshal grants to his new church of St. John the Evangelist the whole of the parish beyond the bridge at Kilkenny,[3] which implies the previous existence of this and the adjacent parishes, and the " parochia ultra pontem—versus orientem" is plainly in contradistinction to some other parish then existing at the western side of the river. Our present parish of St. Mary occupies this district. It was founded by the colonists, as its boundaries and those of the " High-town," or English settlement, are nearly conterminous; but a parish previously existed here which lay between and entirely separated those of St. Patrick's and St. Canice's; and the locality of St. Rioch's churchyard points it out as the site of the ancient parochial church.

On the accompanying map I have traced on a scale, reduced from the Ordnance Survey, the parochial boundaries of St. Canice's, St. Patrick's, and St. Mary's. The local complication and peculiar dovetailing of those parishes into each other afford sufficient evidence

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built in honour of St. Maula, the mother of St. Kenny; but in support of the views advanced in the text, I respectfully submit that there is no saint named Maul or Maula in any Irish or other calendar or martyrology yet published. Lanigan (vol. ii., p. 200) plainly asserts, on the authority of Ware's " Irish Writers," that the name of Kenny's mother was " Melda," and neither she nor " Laidec," his father, were recognised as saints, and it was always contrary to ecclesiastical law and usage to dedicate churches to others. There can be little doubt that the word Maul, or Maula, is a mere modification of the name variously written " Mel," " Mela,"

" Mael," " Moel." The last is the orthography adopted by the late Dr. Kelly as the derivative of the Irish name, which he gives at page 69, " Martyrology of Tallaght." Moel was nephew to St. Patrick, brother to St. Rioch, and is to this day honoured as patron bishop of the diocese of Ardagh, on the 6th of February.
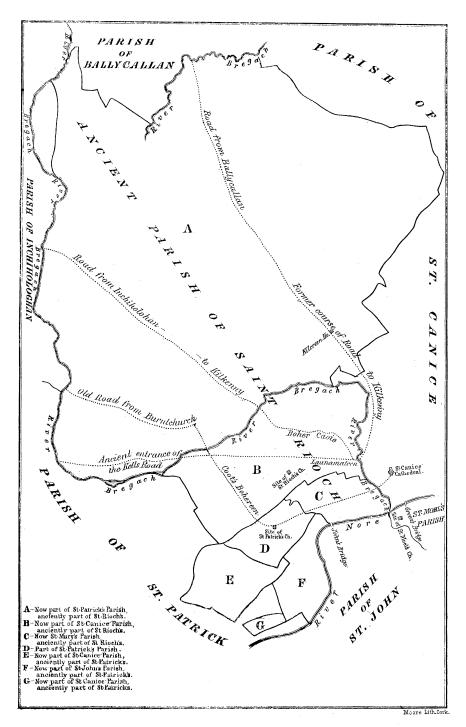
[1] Keating, vol. ii. p. 322, Dublin edition, 1809.

[2] Id., p. 332.

[3] " Concessi etiam totam parochiam ultra pontem de Kilkenny versus orientem," &c., " Appendix of Original Records."—Ledwich's History of Irishtown and Kilkenny.

of a comparatively modern arrangement, and also the probable extent of the ancient parish of St. Rioch. Thus, St. Patrick's Church is separated from the body of its own parish, being insulated by that of St. Canice, which reaches as far south as " Hoban's-bridge," in the townland of " Maiden-hill ;" whilst, west of this district, St. Patrick's parish stretches as high to the north as the townland of " Holden's-rath," so that the tract of country extending about two Irish miles west of the River Nore to the stream of the Bregach, which forms the eastern boundary of the parish of Ballycallan, is parcelled out into three portions : one moiety constitutes the parish of St. Mary, and the remaining two are attached respectively to the parishes of St. Canice and St. Patrick. From the " Hightown Gate," or our present " Watergate-bridge," to the Parade, or, as it was formerly known, " Castle-street," and from the river to our present " New-street," forms the parish of St. Mary.[1] From a line drawn through New-street and Flood-street to the east stream of the Bregach, through the townland of " Poulgour," is annexed to St. Canice's parish ; and from this stream to the western curve of the

[1] The boundaries of St. Mary's parish are peculiarly interesting, as they indicate the extent of the " Hightown" at the period of the establishment of the parish. The Bregach River forms the northern line ; the western limits agree with a line drawn through New-street and Flood-street ; and the southern boundary is formed by the thoroughfare leading from St. John's-bridge in the direction of the Waterford-road. In the Earl Marshal's Charter to St. John's Abbey, this bridge is mentioned as the " Parvi Pontis," in contradistinction to Green's-bridge, the "Magni Pontis." A roadway must have existed here as early as the erection of the bridge, and this road, subsequently furnished with houses, and, now known as Rose-inn-street, constituted the southern boundary of St. Mary's parish. The parochial line passes hence up Patrick-street, as high as the house in which the Society's Museum was recently held ; here it turns to the west, and traverses the garden to the town wall. Its track through the gardens is remembered by many still living to have been an open passage to New-street. It was in this passage or lane that the house of the celebrated General St. Ruth was situated, who left it and some gardens to pay £12 a year to some charity no longer known. Here Dr. Ellison kept school while the College was building, and it was subsequently occupied as a barrack (Tighe's "Survey," p. 527). This house was taken down about the year 1817 or 1818, and the three houses erected which now face Patrick-street. These houses were originally designed for a hotel, and exertions were made at that time by the proprietor and his friends to have the new Cork road enter Kilkenny here. From this passage or lane a " sallyport" in the rampart wall afforded communication with another lane at the opposite side of the wall. This part of the lane is still open at the end of the Veterinary Establishment in New-street, and corresponding with it is an old boundary running through the Nursery Gardens, now a stone wall, but a hundred years ago an earthen ditch, apparently the remains of an ancient roadway, leading from the southern end of the Hightown across the Bregach River. A continuation of this boundary was open as a public thoroughfare twenty years since, through the townland of " Marnell's Meadows," and it is so shown on the Ordnance Sheet, and part of it is still open from the Circular-road or new line to Kilcreen, down to the stream of the Bregach. This road or passage must have been a very primitive pathway, as it could serve no purpose of public utility subsequent to the construction of the road through Walkin-street. It determined the southern bounds of St. Mary's parish as far as New-street, where the parochial line turns by an acute angle to the north ; but it seems highly probable that the continuation of this road constituted the line of demarcation between the ancient parishes of St. Patrick and St. Rioch as far as the stream of the Bregach.

MAP OF SUPPOSED ANCIENT PARISH OF ST. RIOCH.

same rivulet, west of the townland of " Kylebeg," belongs to St.
Patrick's parish. The present parochial boundaries, as traced on the
accompanying map, show these three compartments as originally
united, and forming one ecclesiastical district, which we may safely
recognise as the ancient parish of St. Rioch.

It may now be difficult, if not impossible, to determine with cer-
tainty the precise period of the partition of St. Rioch's parish, or the
suppression of his church, but the probable era may be arrived at from
collateral and ascertained circumstances. There can be little doubt
that the present ecclesiastical divisions of Kilkenny were constructed
subsequent to the establishment of the cathedral here, and conse-
quent on the foundation of St. Mary's Church and parish in the
" Hightown." The Bishops of Ossory, after the Conquest, being
of English extraction, naturally fostered the growth of the English
colony here. Ware, in the " Life of Hugh Rufus," goes so far as
to say that that prelate granted a portion of Kilkenny to William
Earl Marshal ; and Stanihurst records " that ' the High-town' was
builded by the English after the Conquest, and had a parcel of the
' Irishtown' thereto united by the Bishop his grant made unto the
founders thereof upon their earnest request." From this liberality
in temporals, we may form an idea of the Bishop's munificence in
spirituals ; and whilst the Earl at one end of the settlement was in-
vesting his ville with political franchises and civic exemptions, the
Bishop, from the opposite extremity, was endowing it with ecclesi-
astical immunities and parochial dignities; and hence the establish-
ment of St. Mary's church and parish, from which we may date the
first encroachment on the ancient territory of St. Rioch.

The deeds of transfer between Hugh Rufus and William Earl
Marshal, recently published in the " Journal" of the Society,
by Rev. James Graves, throw an interesting light on this important
and eventful epoch. In these documents the " Church of the
Blessed Mary" is mentioned as already existing with that of St.
Patrick; and if the transfer between the Bishop and the Earl was
effected in the year 1202, as the Rev. Mr. Graves inclines to believe,
this being the first year of the episcopacy of the former,—the Church
of St. Mary must have been erected in the lifetime of his predecessor,
Felix O'Dullany, and in the very infancy of the colony, otherwise it
must have been in course of erection only when the Bishop was vested
with its patronage. Be this, however, as it may, the acquisition by
the Bishop of the churches of St. Mary in the " Hightown," and
of St. Patrick of " Donnaghmore," in all probability determined
the present ecclesiastical geography of Kilkenny. The " parcel of
the Irishtown" granted by the Bishop, on the earnest request of the
founders, appears to have been the suburbs, which were by this time
growing up on the south bank of the Bregach River, which subse-

quently formed the environs of the Gray or Franciscan Abbey, and to this day retain the most antique aspect of any portion of the " Hightown ;" but for his liberality towards the founders of the colony the Bishop appears to have indemnified himself by annexing to his own parish that portion of St. Rioch's which now forms the wing of St. Canice's south and east of the Bregach River.

Though it is not recorded in the " Charter," there can be little doubt that the Earl retained for his own new church beyond the bridge that portion of the parish of St. John which still lies at the south-west side of the River Nore, which includes the Castle grounds and part of the " Duke's Meadows," and which must have previously formed part of St. Patrick's parish. The annexation of this important tract to St. John's, and of the townland now known as " Archer's-street Lot," to St. Canice's, so encroached on the ancient parish of St. Patrick, that it was necessary to indemnify the representative of the " National Apostle," and accordingly the western and largest portion of St. Rioch is annexed to his parish as an equivalent. If these views be well founded, it will follow that the abolition of St. Rioch's parish was accomplished during the episcopacy of Hugh Rufus, " the first English Bishop of Ossory."

Whether the suppression of St. Rioch's Church was coeval with, or subsequent to, the abolition of the parish, may be questionable ; the latter appears the more probable. However, down to a very recent period, we can trace the existence of a special veneration having been paid him as one of the patron saints of St. Mary's parish; and, so late as the year 1830, a remnant of the ancient parish festival continued to be still observed in the form of a " patron" on the first Sunday in August.[1]

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[1] The parish festival was called the "patron," from the circumstance of the religious ceremonies being performed on that day in honour of the patron of the church or parish. The patron festival (to use a technical term in ecclesiastical phraseology) being always " a double of the first class with an octave ;" the public worship was accordingly performed with unusual solemnity, and in most places the day was observed as a " holyday." I have been informed by a native of the place that so late as twenty-five years since no person was known to work in the entire parish of " Mallardstown" on the 25th July, the patron day. Since the Reformation, the observances of the festival were transferred to the " Sunday within the octave." After much inquiry, I cannot find that these patrons have been observed elsewhere than on the sites of ancient *parish* churches. There is no trace of any such observances at Jerpoint, Kells, Callan, Knocktopher, &c., those being abbatial, not parochial establishments. On the " patron" day crowds from remote and neighbouring parishes visited the church, dressed the graves of their departed relatives, and performed pilgrimages or "stations" round the "holy well," one of which is to be found in the vicinity of nearly every ancient parish church. These institutions being perverted from their original simplicity to purposes of superstition, profanity, and dissipation, became public nuisances, and were in consequence generally suppressed. The most celebrated "patrons" of our county were those of Tullaroan and John's Well; the former began on " Ladyday in harvest," the patron feast of " Grace's parish," and held till the following Sunday. The old inhabitants recollect a hundred tents to have been erected for the patron week in the " Moat-field." The " Moat" itself is situated within 150 yards of the old church, it is more than 20 feet above the natural surface of the

When St. Mary's Church passed out of the hands of the Roman Catholics, they soon after erected a chapel outside of the town wall. To this modern fane they carried the discipline and traditional observance of the older church, and amongst them I can trace a special honour for St. Rioch. This was manifested by a full-sized oil painting of this saint, which was preserved in " James's-street Chapel" (as it is named in Rocque's map) down to the year 1804 ; those who remember it, and are still living, thus describe it :—" The saint was represented seated on a rock, in the midst of a forest, clothed in a loose scarlet robe, with a dog fawning at and apparently engaged in licking the sores and bruises of his feet." Of the original history of this picture I can discover nothing. Whether, with other things that have come down to our times, it may have been transferred here from St. Mary's Church, is now impossible to ascertain. From time immemorial it was suspended at the " Epistle side" of the altar, until, in Bishop Lanigan's time, it was superseded by another painting of the same saint of more artistic pretensions. When the altar had been erected which still stands in the old chapel, the Bishop wrote to a gentleman, a friend of his, then in Portugal, to order three pictures to be painted for its decoration. These were the " Crucifixion ;" the " Assumption of the Virgin," to which the church was dedicated ; and a full-length portrait of St. Rioch, the patron of the ancient parish : so that down to that period no doubt can be entertained that the privileges claimed for St. Rioch in this paper were then partially recognised. This painting still exists, and represents the saint in the garb of a pilgrim, with a flowing scarlet tunic over the habit of a religieuse, to which is attached the scallop shell, and a girdle round his waist. He stands erect in a forest; his left foot rests on a rock; he holds in his left hand a pilgrim's staff, from a

ground, with a platform on the top of about 30 yards in diameter, and a large opening on the eastern side. This mound or rath presents every appearance of having been originally designed for religious or civil assemblies, as the ground has the form of benches along the sides and edges, and the platform is too small for the accommodation of either cattle or men in any great numbers.—(See " Parochial Survey of Ireland," by Shaw Mason, vol. iii., p. 514.) On this platform dancing took place during the " patron" days. The entire moat or rath was planted some few years since by W. F. Finn, Esq. ; the pines and other trees are now grown up, and add a graceful embellishment to the surrounding undulations. The patron of Tullaroan was suppressed about thirty-two years ago. The patron of John's Well was still more famous ; it opened on St. John's day, 24th of June, and continued till SS.

Peter and Paul's day, the 29th. An aged person thus described this patron (his countenance grew ruddy as the memory of the " heyday" of his youth flashed before his mind) :—" I saw 140 tents fixed up. I saw 40 white horses grazing in one field, and those of all other shades were beyond my calculation." This patron was suppressed by the late Bishop Kinsella, on account of the public scandal that attended it. There was a remarkable patron held in the neighbourhood of Kilkenny, called the " Patron of Calloch," or the " Patron of the Hags." It was held in different places in different years, in the townlands of "Talbotsinch," " Lousey-bush," and " Coolgrange," on the last Sunday in August. This appears to have been the remains of the parish festival of the ancient church of Drumdelgy, or Thornback, of which we shall have to make some inquiries hereafter.

hook near the top of which a travelling wallet is suspended, and to which he appears emphatically to point attention with the fourth finger of his right hand. The great peculiarity of the painting is the Irishism of the countenance, the expression of which is homely and familiar. The three pictures bear each the following inscription :—

"Eques Foschini, Ulissiponensis, Inv. et Pinxit, A.D. 1807."[1]

The Langtons, Comerfords, Maddens, Shees, and many of the other old families of Kilkenny, were the principal benefactors of the old chapel; its clergy were also natives of Kilkenny, and, in consequence, the ecclesiastical traditions of the town were more directly transmitted and more faithfully preserved then than since. If during this period the clients of Rioch assembled annually to hold his festival day on the site of his old church; if during the same period a special spot was set apart for his picture in the chapel of the " Hightown;" and if under improved circumstances, and by special design, a painting more worthy of the respect entertained for him be ordered from the Continent to fill the niche reserved for it in the new chapel, is it not evident that this veneration is but the vestige of a more ancient and extensive practice, and may we not safely infer that the Bishop who abolished his parish, and suppressed his church (to use the sarcasm of Ledwich), " to appease the tutelar saint, and to atone for the sacrilege, founded an altar or chapel" in St. Mary's Church, " and dedicated it to him," where his memory was perpetuated and honoured, whence both were subsequently transferred to St. Mary's Chapel, where, unfortunately, they now no longer exist ?[2]

[1] From the description which I have received of the first-mentioned picture, I apprehend that our St. Rioch, in the disturbance of the times, was confounded with St. Roach, of Montpellier, who died about the year 1327, and has been honoured on the 16th August on both sides of the Alps since the middle of the fourteenth century. It is related of him that, falling sick in one of his pilgrimages, he crawled into a neighbouring forest, where a dog used to lick his sores. (Butler, August 16.) Respecting the existing picture, it having been executed by a foreign artist, who, knowing nothing of our Irish patron, seems to have taken it for granted that Roach, of Montpellier, was the saint required, and, accordingly, copied our picture from some Continental original of the French pilgrim. The inscription above would seem to imply that Foschini was designer as well as the painter. This I consider more than doubtful, for all the French engravings and modern lithographs of St. Roach invariably represent him precisely the same as St. Rioch is on the oil painting now existing in the old chapel.

[2] Since this paper was written, the picture of St. Rioch has been purchased by the Rev. M. Birch, P. P., for the parish chapel of Muckalee, so that his memory has perished where it was designed to be preserved.